

DIXIE TRANSPORTATION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (DTEC)
MINUTES
May 16, 2012

PRESENT

Jim Eardley, Washington County Commission
Jerry Lewis, UDOT Commissioner
Chris Hart, Ivins City Mayor
Gail Bunker, St. George City
Jimmie Hughes, St. George City
Jeff Turek, Washington City
Ken Sizemore, Five County
Matt Ence, Santa Clara City
Arthur LeBaron, Hurricane City
Mike Vercimak, Hurricane City Public Works Director
Mike Shaw, Washington City
Myron Lee, Dixie MPO
Larry Bulloch, St. George City Public Works Director
Marreen Casper, Sen. Hatch
Ellen Schunk, Sen. Lee
Curt Hutchings, Dixie MPO
Ron Whitehead, Washington County Public Works Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Eardley called the meeting to order at 12:10 pm. A quorum was confirmed.

MINUTES

Approval of Minutes of March 21, 2012

MOTION: Motion by Mayor Hart to Approve the Minutes of March 21, 2012, as presented. Motion seconded by Commissioner Lewis and carried by unanimous vote.

ACTION ITEMS

Ratification of TIP as Recommended by DTAC

Myron Lee asked for ratification of an amended TIP and distributed a spreadsheet entitled "Dixie MPO Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), 5-2-2012 Draft." The document shows what funding is being spent on which projects. The yellow highlighted items are the amendments. The State of Utah has agreed to fund certain projects, and that funding was not anticipated, so those changes have been made. Essentially what

was done was to take the money from those projects in light yellow and redistribute it among other projects (highlighted in dark yellow), adding one new project, which is to make the I-15 MP 8 Interchange a diverging diamond with a pedestrian crossing. The State has contributed \$15 million and St. George City has contributed \$500,000. A copy of this document is attached.

**MOTION: Motion by Gail Bunker to Ratify the Amended TIP as presented.
Motion seconded by Jeff Turek and carried by unanimous vote.**

Mayor Hart asked what stimulated this unexpected infusion of money from the State, and Mr. Lee responded that there were two reasons: (1) the MPO earmarked some money (approximately \$2.2 million) several years ago to perform environmental assessments (EAs) on I-15 and on Bluff Street. From those assessments, various projects were recommended along those corridors. City of St. George sent a letter pledging a significant amount of local participation in those projects and recommending that some leftover money from federal projects be diverted to these new projects.

Commissioner Lewis's enormous contribution in representing the Dixie MPO's interests on the UDOT Commission was also recognized. Commissioner Lewis added that Mayor McArthur has been working towards the MP 8 project for quite some time.

Approval of FY 2013 Work Plan

Mr. Lee said that electronic copies of the 23-page Work Plan are available upon request. This document describes what the MPO will be doing over the next year, part of which is a summary of tasks (attached) and (also attached) a Summary of FY 2013 Funding Sources, which puts a dollar figure on each of these tasks. The MPO has accomplished quite a bit in 2012 so far, such as the Regional Transit Study; participation in congestion/traffic studies of MP 8 and MP 10; and updating the TIP with its various transportation issues. A new transportation model needs to be updated by incorporating new census data and population projections from the Governor's Office of Planning & Budget (GOPB). In addition, the Household Travel Survey data will be added to the transportation model. Curt Hutchings added that the Household Travel Survey represents a push toward utilizing locally-generated data.

Approval of FY 2013 Budget and Vote Share

Mr. Lee explained that the MPO needs to get approximately \$42,000 of local match monies, and to do that, it looks to the vote share. Each entity that is a part of the MPO contributes \$7,000 per vote: St. George City has three votes and Santa Clara, Ivins, and Washington City all have one vote. At this time, there appears to be no need to

increase or decrease the vote share, so the MPO recommends flat funding moving forward. This concept was approved by the DTAC last month. When the MPO was first formed, the vote share was \$12,000 per vote; that was reduced to \$9,000; then it was reduced again to \$7,000 several years ago.

At the urging of Federal Highways, we are reducing the amount of money we are spending on administration and increasing the money that is going into public involvement and services. This work plan assumes the same staffing as last year. Tasks are being rotated among staff members, but the total staff remains static.

MOTION: Motion by Councilman Jimmie Hughes to Approve the FY 2013 Work Plan. Motion seconded by Matt Ence and carried by unanimous vote.

MOTION: Motion by Matt Ence to Approve the FY 2013 Budget and Vote Share. Motion seconded by Mayor Hart and carried by unanimous vote.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Future MPO Boundary Discussion

Mr. Lee said that the attached DMPO/EWCRPO 2010 Census Designated Areas map shows a red line outlining the urbanized area and an orange line indicating an urban cluster, which is similar to an urbanized area but is not part of an MPO (defined as an urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more). By statute, any area that may become an urbanized area within the next 20 years must be included within the MPO boundaries.

The federal dollars that come to the State are divided into five pots: one for each MPO and one for the Joint Highway Committee. If our MPO boundary changed to include Hurricane, LaVerkin, Toquerville, and Leeds, then that money would flow into DTEC to be dispersed. Mr. Lee asked for any discussion on revision of the boundaries; the deadline for any revision is October of this year.

Commissioner Eardley asked what the process would be if Hurricane and LaVerkin, for example, decided they wanted to join the MPO. Mr. Lee said if other cities wanted to join and this group approved it, the funding formula would change. Arthur LeBaron, from Hurricane City, said that the money Hurricane gets from the Joint Highway Committee seems to come too often, because it's frequently difficult to develop projects to keep up with the flow of dollars. Having the planning money coming into the city for corridor studies and traffic models would definitely be helpful. He could not speak for the City Council or Mayor, however, who might have their own concerns, but he said it

would be beneficial to have that discussion.

When the MPO was formed in 2002, and drew the boundary to include four cities, they looked 20 years into the future and tried to predict the population densities at that time. Commissioner Lewis said that in 2002 Hurricane was consulted about joining the MPO, and Hurricane evaluated the amount of money it was currently getting versus what it would receive as part of the MPO, and the determination was made at that time that it was more beneficial to the city to use the money currently coming in from Joint Highways.

Councilman Hughes asked whether, if other cities were to join, the MPO would have greater seniority or influence. Commissioner Eardley said that there have been recent discussions regarding threshold levels of populations, which used to be 50,000 and is now 200,000. If that were applied to Washington County, we would be out of the MPO because we have just over 100,000 in our MPO right now. Matt Ence suggested waiting to find out whether the outlying cities will meet the qualifications/criteria for coming into the MPO, and Ken Sizemore said that his office has been charged with the analysis to make that determination. By October of 2013, it is hoped that this body will be able to review that analysis and make a decision. At a recent DTAC meeting, Steve Call with UDOT said that the FHWA would probably support any decision made by the MPO based on the analysis that would be performed. A dialogue needs to happen with some of the elected officials of those municipalities to determine their interest in joining in with the MPO.

Transportation Reauthorization Update

Ken Sizemore said that there is a federal highway transportation bill that says that there will be metropolitan planning organizations based on a formula of money based on regulations that they passed during the last Transportation Authorization (TA), which expired in 2009. We've been operating on the formula and regulations (currently on the 9th extension) of that TA and have no idea when or if it will be reauthorized. The House of Representatives and the Senate have passed bills that are different. A conference committee has been formed, with Senator Hatch and Rep. Bishop on that committee. The 9th temporary authorization extension expires in June, and they are discussing extending it again until September, after the conference committee discussion.

At the same time, the fund that collects all of the gas tax revenue from all over the country to fund all of these transportation operations will run out of money by Spring of 2013. There must be new legislation in place to determine the direction of that funding stream. Tax revenues are declining with the current economic downturn. There is a huge gap between need (all the TIPS all over the country) and revenue sources.

The legislation in the House wants to authorize a 5-year program, whereas the Senate bill provides for a 2-year program because they can't resolve the revenue issue. No one in Congress wants to make hard decisions, at least not until after the election. Therefore, they are kicking the can down the road. The House version creates a 100,000 population level; the Senate creates a 200,000 level. Both sets of legislation grandfather in existing MPOs. The Dixie MPO may have to justify its existence in order to satisfy regulations of Congress. The Senate version provides for an entire methodology for existing MPOs to justify their continuance.

Mr. Sizemore said that we need to convince Congressional leaders that we need some certainty, another authorization for at least two years (or hopefully longer), so that we may move forward with our transportation projects. Marreen Casper from Sen. Hatch's office said that specific concerns should be forwarded to John Tanner, who will convey those to the Senator. The Committee is meeting daily; however, things are progressing very slowly.

Mr. Sizemore said that next week the Utah Population Estimates Committee meets. Since 1970, Washington County's population has been underestimated every year. The Governor's Office numbers represent about a 2.4% annual growth rate, whereas in the past the growth rate has always been closer to 4%. All current methodologies represent permanent residents rather than snowbirds and other seasonal residents.

Commissioner Eardley said that the County has doubled in population in the last ten years. Mayor Hart commented that it is simply stupid to make planning projections based on an inaccurate model that has not been correct for the past thirty years. Further, by underestimating our County's population, money that should come into Washington County based on accurate figures is being diverted to other counties in the State. Mayor Hart added that there is a reservoir of interest and demand that has been backlogged due to the economic downturn; real estate offices are busy now, with more homes being sold.

UDOT/FHWA BUSINESS

Jerry Lewis had no new project update information from UDOT.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, June 20, 2012**, in the Upstairs Conference Room of the Washington County Administration Building located at 197 E. Tabernacle St., St. George, Utah, at 12:00 p.m.

Having no other business, Chairman Eardley adjourned the meeting at 1:23 p.m.